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ABSTRACT

This synopsis presents the key findings from a multi-year evaluation of the Cities in Schools (CIS) program, a school-based intervention for at-risk youth. Cities in Schools, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation that provides training and technical assistance to promote replication of the CIS dropout prevention process in communities and schools. The CIS model integrates existing community services and resources and relocates them to the school site to achieve dropout reduction and to relieve associated problems. The model aims to bring together the often fragmented agencies that provide youth services to promote more effective services and interventions. An evaluation of the CIS program was conducted by sponsoring federal agencies, headed by the Office of Juvenile Justice Programs. Data from site visits, interviews with program administrators, and reviews of program documents were collected. Evaluators recommended that the CIS national organization emphasize training and technical assistance to bolster areas where weaknesses were identified and that better data be kept for accountability purposes. Other recommendations concerned the role of partnership agencies. (SLD)

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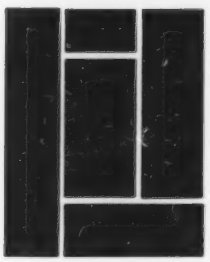

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NATIONAL EVALUATION OF CITIES IN SCHOOLS

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This synopsis relays the key findings of a multi-year evaluation of the Cities in Schools (CIS) program, a school-based intervention for at-risk youth. Cities in Schools, Inc., is a nonprofit organization that provides training and technical assistance to promote replication of the CIS dropout prevention program in communities and schools. The CIS model involves establishing community-based CIS programs that develop projects in school sites to provide services to youth at risk of dropping out of school. The objective of the model is to integrate existing community services and resources, and relocate them to the school site to achieve dropout reduction and mitigate related problems, such as substance abuse, gang involvement, violence, and other risky behaviors.

This evaluation of CIS was sponsored by a consortium of federal agencies that provide support to the national CIS organization for replication of the CIS model. The federal partnership is led by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Long-standing partners include the U.S. Departments of Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor. The federal partners sought a process and impact evaluation that would assess the CIS national organization's replication process and its training and technical assistance efforts, as well as the degree to which the CIS model has been implemented at the community level, and the effects it appears to have on schools and students. Detailed evaluation findings are presented in a final report (Rossman and Morley, 1995-a) and in three volumes, each focused on specific elements of the research design (see Morley and Rossman 1995-a, 1995-b; and Rossman and Morley 1995-b).

A brief overview of the CIS organization and community program model and the evaluation methodology are provided as context for the findings that follow.

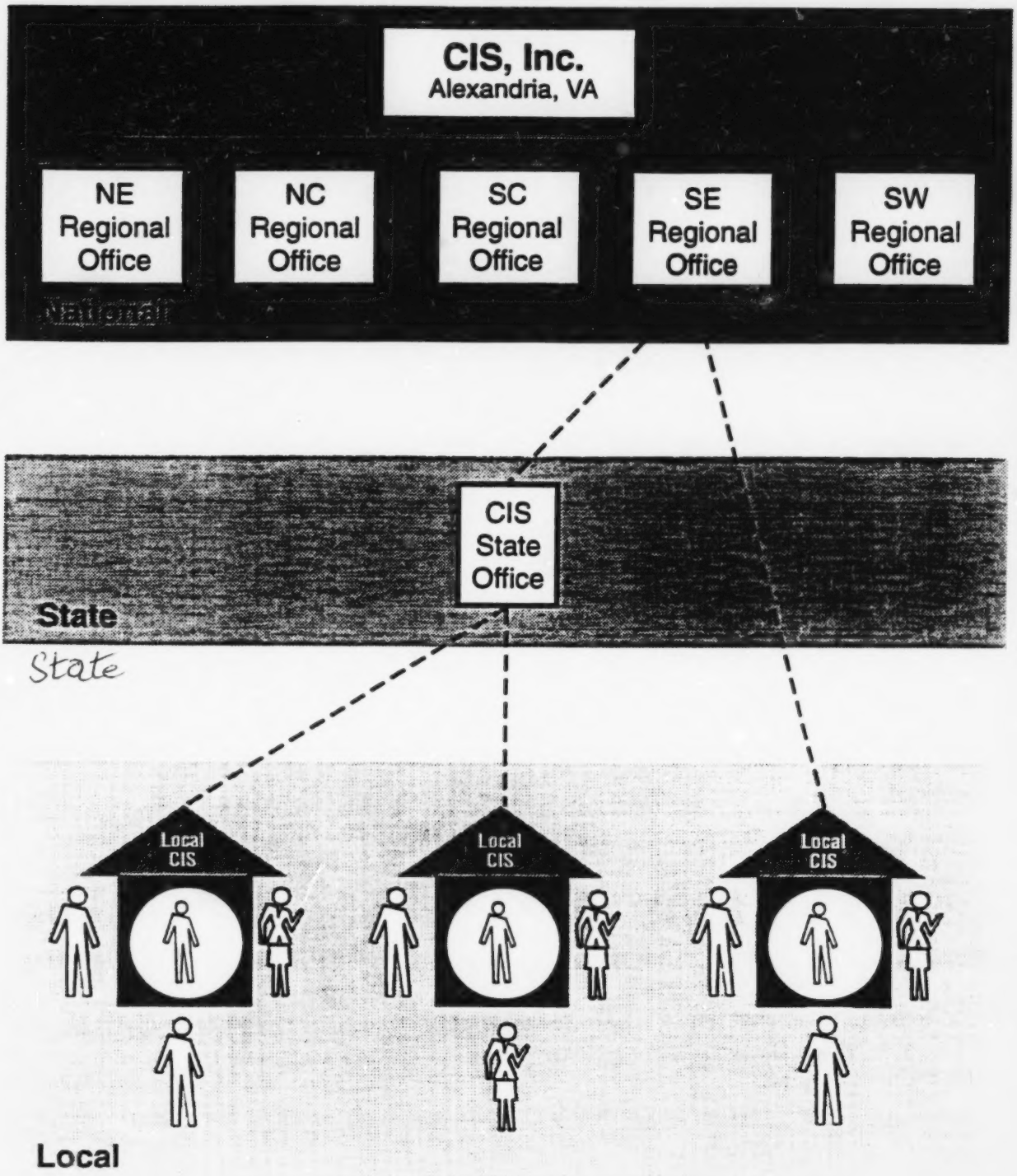
CIS Overview

The national organization, CIS, Inc., was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1977, but had earlier origins in "street academies," or storefront schools, established in New York City in the 1960s. CIS staff frequently refer to CIS as a movement, and to the CIS "model" or approach as being a process or strategy for service delivery, rather than a program. A key philosophical underpinning of CIS is that the existing human services delivery system is fragmented, categorical and uncoordinated, but that clients of the system (including youth and their families) have multiple problems that extend beyond the relatively narrow agendas of particular agencies. It is believed that resources to help youth and their families are already allocated, but a coordinating structure for them is lacking. In addition, gaps and duplication of services may exist when agencies work in isolation. The CIS model is intended to bring various agencies together as a team in order to promote more effective provision of services to youth and their families. Since youth are legally required to attend school, CIS projects are located within public schools or non-traditional education sites.

A national organizational structure and network have evolved to support the CIS mission and philosophy. The linkage between CIS, Inc., and CIS community programs can be conceptualized in terms of four tiers (see Exhibit 1). The first two tiers are composed of CIS

Exhibit 1

The National Cities In Schools Network



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headquarters and the five regional offices, which together comprise the national organization, CIS, Inc. These two levels exist in a traditional organizational hierarchy, with regional staff reporting to specific headquarters staff. State CIS programs are a third tier, falling under the regional offices, while community programs are placed under the state program of the state in which they are located (if no state program exists in their state, they fall under the appropriate regional office). State and local programs are autonomous organizations, generally structured as independent, nonprofit corporations. They function in a cooperative relationship with CIS, Inc., although the latter has no authority over them. State and community-level programs similarly have a cooperative relationship.

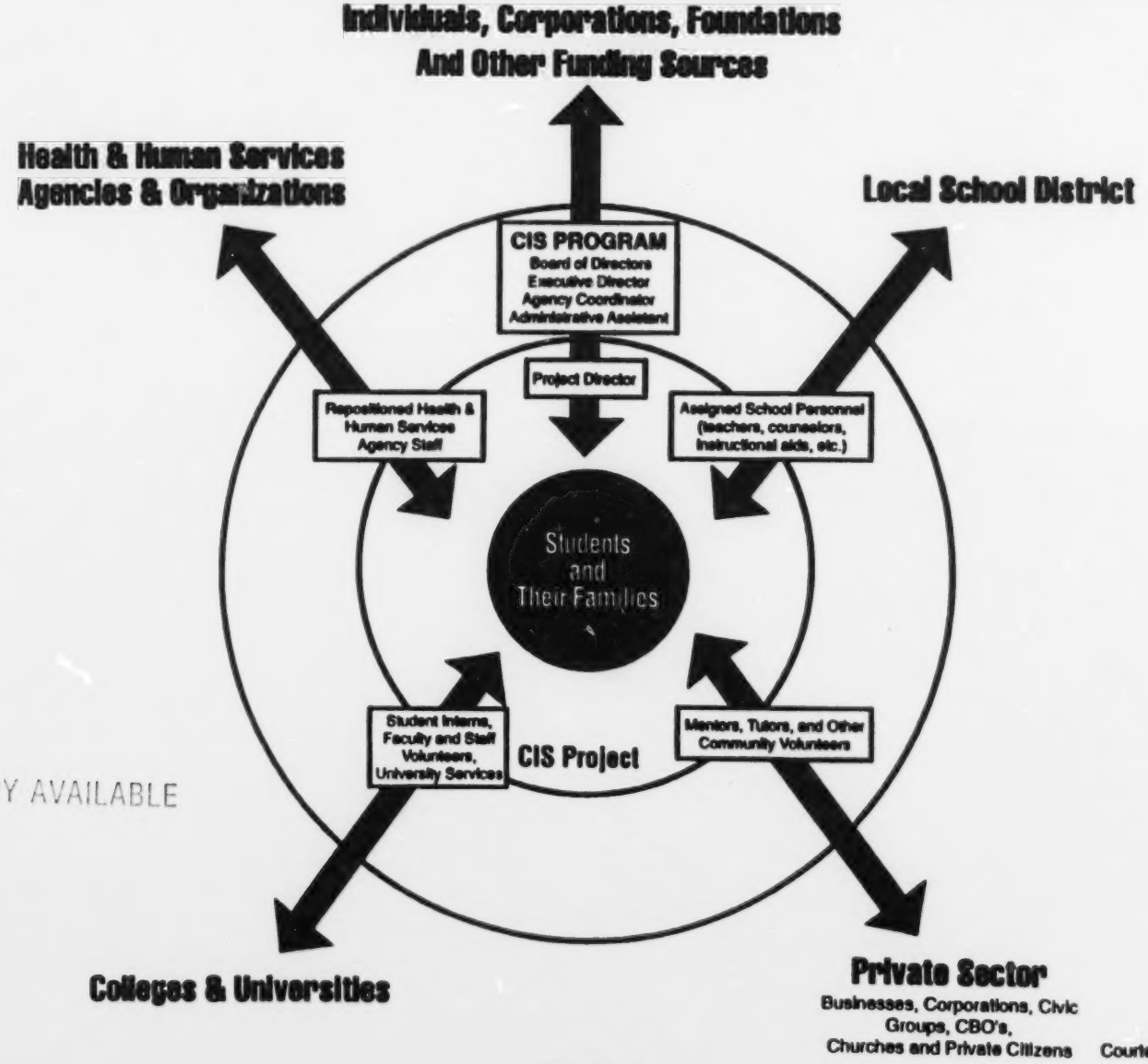
CIS community programs and commitments to develop school-based projects are brought about through a process of community involvement and empowerment (referred to as the replication process). The CIS national organization provides training and technical assistance in this process to representatives of communities interested in developing CIS initiatives.

The CIS model at the community level involves development of autonomous city or county programs that are responsible for initiating and managing CIS projects in local schools. Community programs generally are formed through partnerships involving local government (e.g., school districts), service agencies, and local businesses. They are usually formed as nonprofit corporations with their own Boards of Directors, although in some cases they function as part of another organization. The community program is responsible for developing resources to support itself and its school projects by facilitating public-private partnerships, raising funds, making arrangements to relocate or outstation ("reposition") staff from service agencies to CIS school projects, and making arrangements for volunteers. Exhibit 2 illustrates the relationship between CIS and other community entities at the school site. CIS program staff are responsible for implementing and providing oversight for CIS projects in schools (or other educational settings). School sites may include existing alternative schools and "academies" developed by/for CIS.

At the school level, the prototype involves bringing together a team of adults to provide services to youth identified as being at risk of dropping out. A school site (or project) director, who is frequently, but not necessarily, employed by the local CIS program, is responsible for management of the school project and team; in some cases, teachers are assigned as the CIS project manager. Other team members may include staff repositioned to CIS (on a full- or part-time basis) from various service agencies (e.g., counselors from social service or substance abuse agencies; employment counselors from local employment commissions; nurses from public health agencies, etc.).

CIS programs generally serve relatively small proportions of the student body of the schools in which they are located. Becoming a CIS student generally involves meeting the program's criteria; agreeing to participate, and receiving parental permission to participate in the program; and being assigned to a "case manager" (who may be the CIS program coordinator in that school). Some CIS school programs enroll only 20 to 30 students as CIS students; others serve several hundred students. In addition to serving students formally enrolled in CIS, CIS

LOCAL CIS PROGRAM/COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP


Individuals, Corporations, Foundations
And Other Funding Sources
Health & Human Services
Agencies & Organizations
Local School District
CIS PROGRAM
Board of Directors
Executive Director
Agency Coordinator
Administrative Assistant
Project Director
Repositioned Health & Human Service Agency Staff
Assigned School Personnel (teachers, counselors, instructional aids, etc.)
Students and Their Families
Student Interns, Faculty and Staff Volunteers, University Services
CIS Project
Mentors, Tutors, and Other Community Volunteers
Colleges & Universities
Private Sector
Businesses, Corporations, Civic Groups, CBO's, Churches and Private Citizens

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Courtesy of Seattle Cities In Schools, 1992.

Exhibit 2

programs generally provide emergency service or advice to non-CIS students, and some sponsor programs or occasional events in which non-CIS students may participate.

A major variation on the CIS school-level model is the academy or corporate academy. Academies include the basic elements of the CIS school model, but often are organized as separate "alternative schools," where all students are part of the CIS program. A "school within a school" approach also is used for academies; this often involves designating a particular wing or portion of a school for the academy, and block-scheduling its students so they attend all, or most, classes together. In some cases, school projects are called academies because of corporate sponsorship, while they otherwise do not differ noticeably from other CIS in-school programs. The corporate academy nomenclature refers to the corporate sponsors of particular academies. The number of corporate academies has expanded considerably in recent years as a result of a partnership between CIS and the Burger King Corporation, which provides financial support to underwrite the costs of developing and operating numerous Burger King Academies across the country. Similar arrangements have been developed with other corporations.

At school project sites, there is typically some form of "case management" to assess student needs, develop service delivery plans (e.g., assign students to particular services or activities), and monitor student progress. All programs provide some form of individual or group counseling for CIS students; this may be informal counseling or guidance, rather than therapeutic counseling provided by clinicians or others with relevant professional certification. In cases where these individuals do not have backgrounds appropriate to provide professional counseling, they function as caring adults in terms of performing the counseling or guidance role. Students and, sometimes, family members also may be referred to various service agencies in the community for services CIS does not provide directly.

A school-based project might include a "CIS class," which is generally an elective class (in middle and high schools) with a focus on life-skills education (classes may include employment-related topics, remedial education, or tutoring). Teachers are assigned to CIS to teach these classes, or may be assigned to provide tutoring or remedial education in other settings. CIS projects typically include volunteers to provide a variety of services, most commonly tutoring and/or mentoring. In addition, a number of programs provide services after school, or have developed special in-school programs or services such as conflict resolution and violence abatement, community service activities, transition to work, and pregnancy or teen parenting programs.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of CIS began in October, 1991; field work was completed in February, 1994. It included both process and impact components, conceptualized in terms of three primary objectives:

- A study of the CIS national organization and replication activities, focusing on the training and technical assistance provided to promote replication of the CIS model.

- A study of a representative sample of CIS sites to assess the effects of local programs on student outcomes and local implementation of the CIS prototype.

- Case studies of ten CIS programs selected for their innovative features, adherence to the CIS model, or other features of interest.

Data collection activities associated with the evaluation of local programs included:

- Interviews with senior-level CIS headquarters staff, as well as with staff in five regional and six state offices.

- Observation of training sessions, including (i) two centralized courses conducted at CIS' National Center for Partnership Development located at Lehigh University, (ii) a joint regional/state training conference annually held in Texas, and (iii) a regional training session targeted to community-level personnel. Review of related instructional manuals, and interviews with trainees present at those sessions were also conducted.

- Telephone interviews with staff in 42 newly operational programs or programs in the replication process; and with representatives of 18 programs that had been discontinued or whose replication efforts were "stalled."

- Field visits to 17 CIS programs selected to be representative of geographical diversity, various program strategies and service configurations. Schools visited at these sites were primarily middle and high schools, and alternative schools at the middle or high school levels.

- Interviews with CIS community (program) and school-based (project) staff and key affiliates; with 125 middle- and high-school students enrolled in CIS projects; and with parents.

- Surveys of CIS staff and program/project support staff, 391 student participants, and parents.

- Data extraction from CIS program/project files and school records for 659 students from CIS cohorts for the 1989/90 and 1990/91 academic years. The sampling frame included all rostered CIS students, not just those who entered the program, during those time periods (i.e., students who had enrolled in CIS during earlier years, and were still participating during the 1989/90 or 1990/91 timeframe, met eligibility criteria).

- Secondary data analyses, including a review of documents describing the functions, responsibilities, and communication patterns within the national,

regional, and state offices. Analyses of documentation provided by local community programs also were performed.

- Site visits to ten communities, including six that had participated in earlier phases of the research, to obtain information about exemplary implementation of the CIS prototype or innovative features, such as crime and violence prevention activities, substance abuse services, employment skills and career development, and parental involvement activities. These visits included interviews with program and school level staff, observation of activities, and collection and review of program documents.

Key Findings Regarding the CIS National Organization and Replication Activities

Key findings of the evaluation related to the CIS national organization, its training and technical assistance activities for community programs, and related policy issues include:

- CIS has successfully promoted awareness of its prototype of service delivery, and provided leadership and support that led to considerable expansion of the CIS network in recent years. In a period of approximately five years (from March 1988 to December 1993), the number of community programs increased more than 200 percent (from 26 to 93 programs), and the number of school sites increased by more than 375 percent (from 128 to 612 school projects).

- As it has matured as an organization, the CIS national organization has strengthened and streamlined its organizational structure and management. This included creation of regional offices whose staff focus on providing training and technical assistance to promote replication of the CIS prototype. More recently, emphasis has been placed on development of autonomous state CIS programs to perform services similar to those of the regional offices. While regional and state offices appear to work well together, their respective roles are evolving and appear to need clarification.

- Development and refinement of centralized training (including three "core courses" related to replication of the CIS model and to managing local programs and school projects) has been a major accomplishment of CIS. More than 700 individuals have participated in these classes since 1989. "Elective" courses were under development to further expand CIS' training slate.

- Most local programs reported satisfaction with the support they received in the form of training and technical assistance (from all levels of CIS). However, more mature programs appear to be somewhat less satisfied with the level of support received than newer ones. The focus of support seems to be directed toward programs that are not yet operational, or are still relatively new. Efforts are needed to develop forms of support targeted to mature programs, and to ensure

that they are not overlooked by the demands associated with facilitating large numbers of developing programs.

- For the most part, local CIS programs that entered the replication process after CIS' centralized training became available have adhered to the suggested replication process fairly closely. They have conducted most steps suggested, although not necessarily in the sequence recommended.

- Regional and state offices have contributed to the expansion of community programs through their provision of considerable amounts of training and technical assistance, although there is variation in the level and type of support provided by different regions and states. Community program staff perceive that regional or state training, rather than centralized training, is more relevant to the issues they confront; this suggests a greater training role for regions and states may be appropriate.

- Based on existing state office contributions to development of community programs, it appears that CIS should encourage more state programs. Autonomous state offices may be preferable to programs located within state agencies, since the latter are vulnerable to potential changes within such agencies, including staff mobility, funding shifts, and changes in administration. State offices appear to need more than one year of support (regardless of funding source) to develop a lasting program at the state level.

- Although the experience with state programs has been largely satisfactory, using them as key providers of training and technical assistance may be something of a weak link due to their autonomous status. CIS should develop mechanisms to strengthen management skills of state directors; CIS also should consider developing uniform procedures or formats for key management practices to promote their use in all states.

- Centralized development of training or technical assistance materials (in addition to existing materials for core courses) for use by state (or regional) programs appears to be desirable to conserve resources and promote quality control (by encouraging provision of "standardized" training across states). Development of clearinghouse functions for training materials at the national organizational level also appears desirable.

- The autonomous nature of local programs presents quality control and accountability concerns for federal agencies that provide funding to the national organization with the intent of achieving particular objectives at the local level. CIS can provide training and attempt to influence state and local programs; however, except in cases where funds are channeled to community programs through the national organization, it does not have authority over local entities.

Thus, local programs may choose not to address substantive issues of concern to the federal partnership agencies (e.g., substance abuse curricula or recruiting youth with court involvement) despite efforts on the part of the national organization to promote programming in those areas of interest.

- The national organization and CIS Board have appropriately turned attention to quality control issues, an important consideration in view of the growth of the network. A Quality and Standards Committee was established in 1993, and its recommendations may resolve some of the issues identified with respect to accountability. This is an area where continued attention and application of resources would be well-advised.

- Data routinely collected by CIS from community level programs over the years have not included student outcome-related data. Since such data are closely associated with accountability, which CIS stresses, it appears desirable for CIS to take a stronger role in promoting performance monitoring than it has done in the past. Proposed changes to national data collection may address this issue.

- As of early 1994, CIS anticipated undertaking several new initiatives, including development of community havens and provision of focused support for new and existing "flagship cities." The number of initiatives being introduced at one time may have detrimental impacts on existing programs and activities, despite anticipated staff growth to support them.

- The projected targeting of support to the flagship cities may divert resources from existing community programs and other developing programs. Care should be taken to avoid truncating the replication process in these communities due to perceived or real pressure to make new flagship programs operational within a particular time period.

- The increased emphasis on corporate academies, including new "sports academies" and JROTC/Career academies, seems inconsistent with CIS' emphasis on serving larger numbers of students, and on restructuring service delivery by providing services in public schools. However, academies can be regarded as viable alternatives if viewed in the context of a system that incorporates several models of site-based service delivery. Under that scenario, the smaller size and more flexible teaching methods associated with academies might be regarded as particularly appropriate for students who have severe problems, requiring more intensive attention. In addition, the academy structure appears to attract funders, who are interested in supporting an identifiable project, rather than co-mingling their funding with other supporters.

Findings Regarding Community Programs and School-Based Projects

A number of cross-cutting issues were identified in the representative programs visited. Some of these issues are the same, or similar to, issues raised in other assessments of collaborative models, services integration, or service provision for at-risk youth. Among the key issues identified:

- Fund raising and community support are key elements for the success of local programs. Even programs that had attained such support were concerned about their ability to sustain funding in the future. Funding is often obtained in the form of seed money for new projects or programs. Once this initial funding is used, local programs, even those that have demonstrated "success," have difficulty finding funders willing to support continued operations of programs since most funding is geared toward start-up ventures.

- Early involvement of the private sector is a key factor in generating continued support for program operations. Having CIS program staff members involved and active in various community efforts and committees/task forces helps promote awareness of, and build support for, the CIS program. Use of publicity on a regular basis also generates public awareness and support. Participation in periodic high-profile community activities also serves this purpose.

- An involved Board is important for raising resources to support a program; several programs helped ensure Board involvement by engaging members in activities (e.g., interviewing potential student participants, mentorship roles) at specific school sites.

- Initial and on-going staff training -- for CIS employees and other staff associated with the program -- is emphasized in several programs. Some ensured that large numbers of staff attended centralized CIS training at NCPD and/or at the regional level, and developed local follow-up training. Some programs provided their own staff development mechanisms to provide on-going or specialized training.

- CIS regards the repositioning of staff from social service agencies and similar organizations to the school site to provide services for CIS students as a key ingredient that differentiates CIS from other programs. However, many programs reported that obtaining repositioned staff was a problem area. In addition, many staff considered as "repositioned" were actually paid, in whole or part, by CIS, or were hired specifically for CIS by agencies providing them. In short, true repositioning is not as widespread as it appears to be. In most programs, repositioned staff represented only a small number of service providers.

- Services integration and case management are weak links in many programs. Programs that use social workers as project directors, or have repositioned social

workers, are more successful in providing case management than programs without such staff. Problem areas associated with services integration at many sites include: (i) difficulty establishing a comprehensive set of services; (ii) services sites are able to access tend not to be integrated with one another; and (iii) services are often accessed only through off-site referral. Most of the programs visited did not achieve real services integration in the sense of providing a full spectrum of services at the school site. In addition, program and agency staff generally reported that participation in CIS had not led to significant changes in the way agencies provide services.

- A commitment to top-down reform on the part of the school district and committed leadership appear to be key factors in initiating CIS programs on a widespread local basis. Similarly, in terms of site selection strategy, some programs recommended choosing schools that are stable or have evidenced recent reforms; schools that are "going downhill" make it virtually impossible for CIS programs to succeed.

- Developing good working relationships between the CIS program and the schools in which projects are located helps ensure their survival. Several programs emphasized the principal as a key figure, since the heart of CIS operations occur at the school level. Ensuring that the principal wants the CIS program in his/her school is critical to overall success. A few programs enhance CIS-school relationships by periodically surveying principals and other school staff to determine their perceptions of the CIS programs in their school; having CIS staff serve on school management teams or committees that focus on identifying and responding to students' academic and social problems; or establishing program liaisons both to facilitate communication between CIS and school staff, and to provide training and assistance for teachers assigned to work with CIS students.

- Development of academies (alternative schools) for CIS students enables use of innovative teaching methods and curricula structured to meet the special needs of CIS students, in addition to providing ancillary services typically associated with CIS programs in regular schools. In alternative schools, principal support for such innovations is virtually guaranteed, since the entire school is developed for CIS. It is important to select or train teachers willing to be creative and to modify their teaching techniques for such settings. In some cases, non-traditional teaching styles also are used in CIS classes in regular schools.

- Programs that developed project components (such as tutoring and/or mentoring) that require substantial numbers of volunteers on a regular basis also have allocated staff to manage this component of the program, in terms of recruitment, training and coordination of volunteers. Availability of on-going support to volunteers also is an important factor in success of such efforts.

- Although some programs have developed special components to involve or provide services to parents, most programs do relatively little along these lines. The majority of parental involvement appears to occur through telephone contact. Even programs that conduct regular home visits generally do so only a few times each year (sometimes only once or twice), except in special cases. Program staff often are frustrated by their difficulty in obtaining greater parental involvement, but lack the resources and time to devote to this, given their primary objective of providing service to students. While some services are provided to parents or other family members (primarily referrals to services), most CIS programs do not appear to be able to meet the objective of treating the child holistically by providing services to the family, as well as the child.

- A few programs recognize the importance of tracking data on student outcomes to shape program/project operations, as well as to demonstrate program success to current and potential funders. However, most programs do not compile data along these lines. Programs keep varying types of information in student files, and most do not compile or aggregate information on a regular basis. Similarly, information sharing among partner agencies, including the CIS program and the school(s), often is not implemented, and can be a barrier to provision of holistic service delivery and to monitoring student progress.

Findings Regarding Student Outcomes and Client Satisfaction

Key findings based on the outcome analyses and client satisfaction data collected in conjunction with the study of representative local programs include the following:

- CIS programs clearly serve the targeted population. (See, for example, Figures 1, 2, and 3, which reflect CIS records of student characteristics at the time they were referred to CIS; and Table 1, which presents students' self-reported problems prior to CIS participation.) This includes both at-risk youth, who should be exposed to prevention efforts designed to avoid future problems, and youth who have already crossed the line into risky behaviors and consequences that require intervention to mitigate and resolve existing problems.

- Based on post-enrollment self-esteem scales, CIS participants evidence relatively high self-esteem. However, it was not possible to determine whether students' esteem was improved by their exposure to CIS, or whether they had reasonably high self-esteem at program entry. Given many CIS programs' emphases on activities designed to bolster students' self-esteem, we recommend that programs adopt the policy of administering self-esteem instruments to students upon intake as a means of focusing program services, and also to document outcomes with respect to students' improvements in this domain.

Figure 1: Family/Household Structure

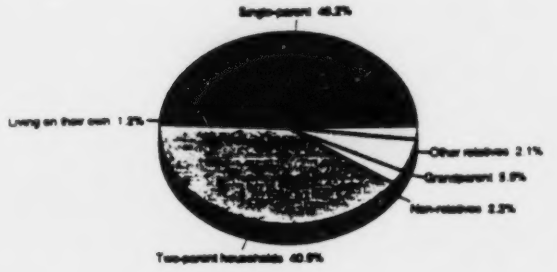

Figure 2: Standardized Testing Results

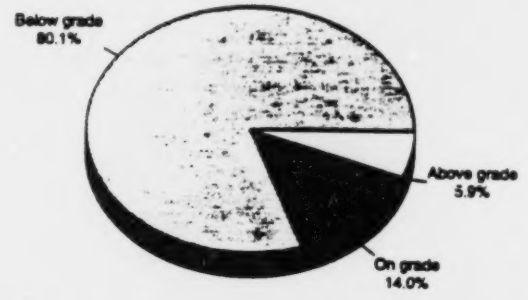

Figure 3: Promotion/Retention in Grade

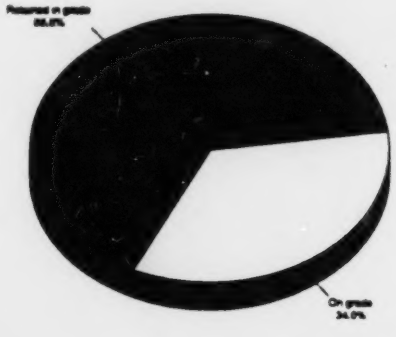

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Table 1.
Percentage of Students Retrospectively Reporting Problems When They First Joined CIS

Problem Areas	Reported Problem Severity			
	Big Problem	Medium Problem	Small Problem	No Problem
Grades	21.1	20.5	25.8	32.7
Completing Homework	18.2	20.4	24.9	36.6
Absenteeism	16.4	14.5	13.4	55.7
Tardiness	11.0	11.3	16.1	61.5
Relationships with Teachers	16.3	10.1	26.1	47.5
Relationships with Students	10.6	6.2	23.9	59.3
Relationships with Family	9.8	7.4	20.6	62.2
Suspensions	12.4	6.3	10.3	71.0
Excessive Drinking	5.3	3.9	7.8	83.0
School Fights	11.1	5.5	17.5	65.8
Police/Legal Involvement	5.8	2.5	5.5	86.2
Excessive Use of Drugs	3.9	2.8	3.9	89.4
Gang Membership or Association	4.7	5.0	7.4	82.9
Pregnancy or Child Care Needs	3.9	2.2	5.9	88.0

* Percentages are valid percents, excluding missing responses.

- Although CIS programs do not achieve stated objectives for all participants, attendance and academic performance are improved for students with serious problems (and also for students with moderately severe problems) in these areas. For example, of the 109 students (48.7 percent of the sample for whom records were available) who entered CIS programs with 10 or more days of absence the previous year, 67.9 percent demonstrated improved attendance. Further, for the 50 students who had severe absenteeism (i.e., exceeding 21 days or more than 10 percent of the school year) prior to CIS enrollment, 70.0 percent improved their attendance, and the average improvement was 6.6 days of increased attendance. Similarly, based on 289 students for whom records were available, 48.8 percent improved their GPAs. Of the students (45.3 percent of the sample) who entered CIS with GPAs of 1.99 or lower, 60.3 percent improved their GPAs during their first year in CIS. For students exhibiting the most severe academic problems (i.e., GPAs less than or equal to 1.0), 78.8 percent improved their grades, and the average improvement in GPA was 1.0 grade point. (See Figures 4 and 5.)

- Given the at-risk characteristics of the students served, CIS programs' cumulative dropout rates compare reasonably well with other programs that serve the same type of student population (e.g., the Boston Compact estimated cumulative dropout rates of 36 percent to 43 percent; a New Jersey study in higher-risk urban areas estimated dropout rates of 40 to 60 percent). CIS students' records, which were tracked as closely as possible up to the date of field visitation during the 1992/93 school year, documented that: (i) 20.7 percent had dropped out of school; (ii) 68.4 percent were still in school; and (iii) 8.6 percent graduated, which represented 68.9 percent of those estimated to be eligible to graduate by this time (or 31.1 percent of the eligible graduation cohort dropped out).

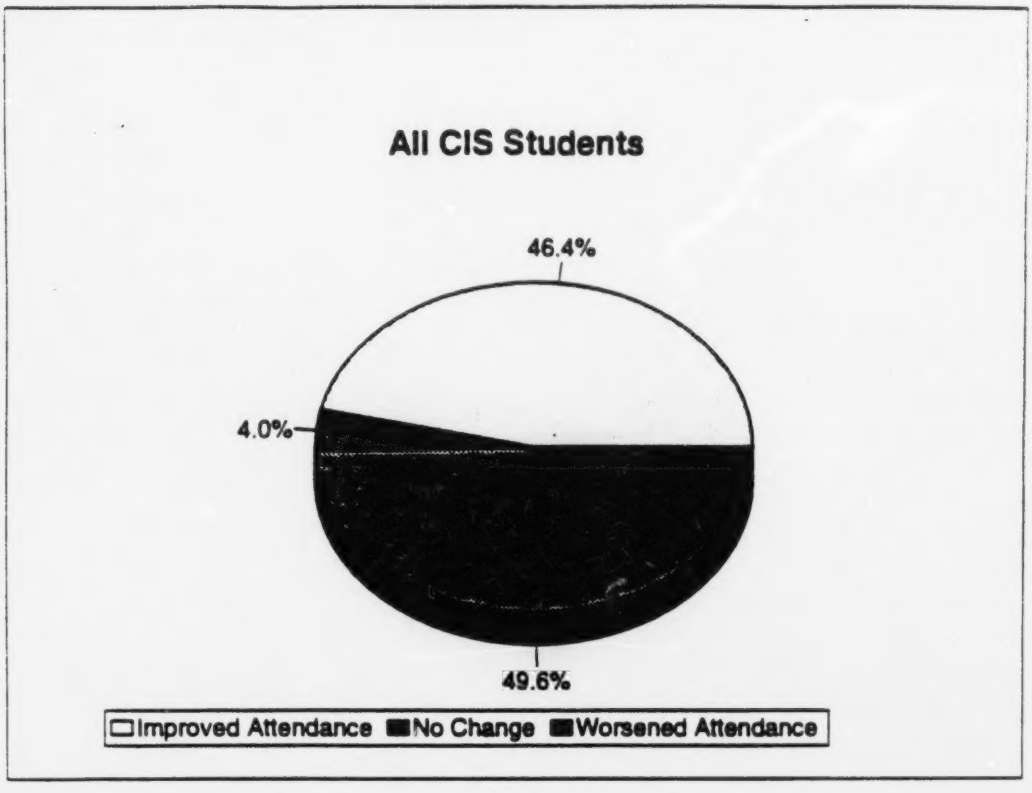
- Students enrolled in CIS alternative school programs demonstrated greater improvements than students in CIS sites at typical public schools.

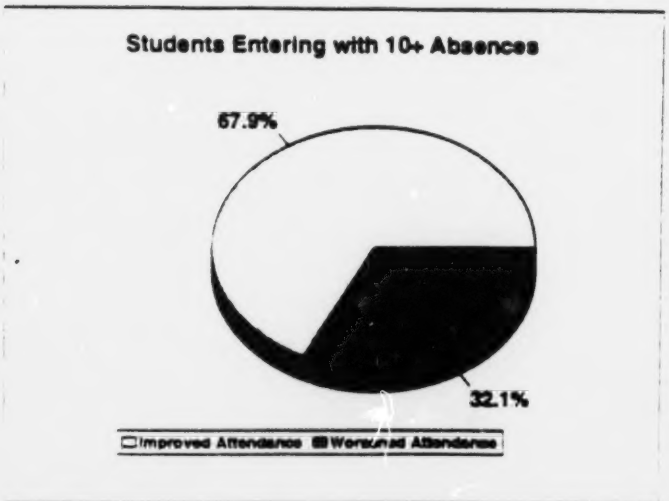
- Students perceive they have benefitted from their association with CIS. They articulated a number of overt, as well as more subtle, changes in attitude and behavior that they attributed to CIS' influence and support (see Table 2). In general, a positive relationship was found to exist between reported problems and improvements; that is, those who reported the most severe problems also reported the most dramatic improvements. This is consistent with the findings that evolved from the records-based analyses of student outcomes.

- The overwhelming majority of students not only reported personal progress, but also expressed high levels of satisfaction with the program (see Table 3). Students were particularly enamored with the warm, supportive relationships that CIS staff initiated and sustained. In general, the students' wish list for expanding CIS services focused on the need for jobs, particularly those they perceived as being

Figure 4

Attendance - Comparison: CIS Entry Year With Year Before





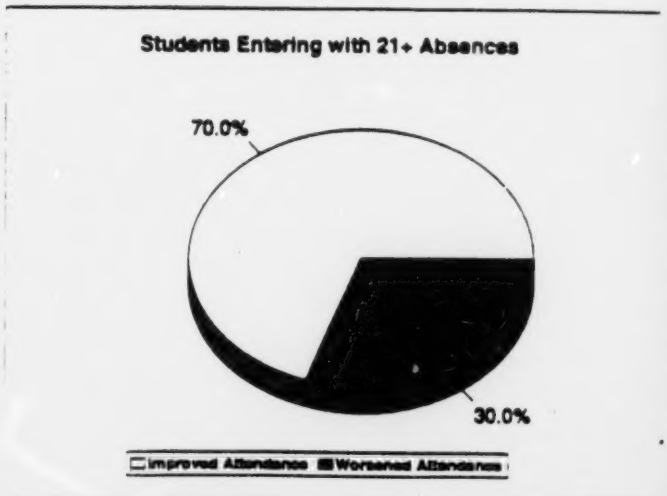


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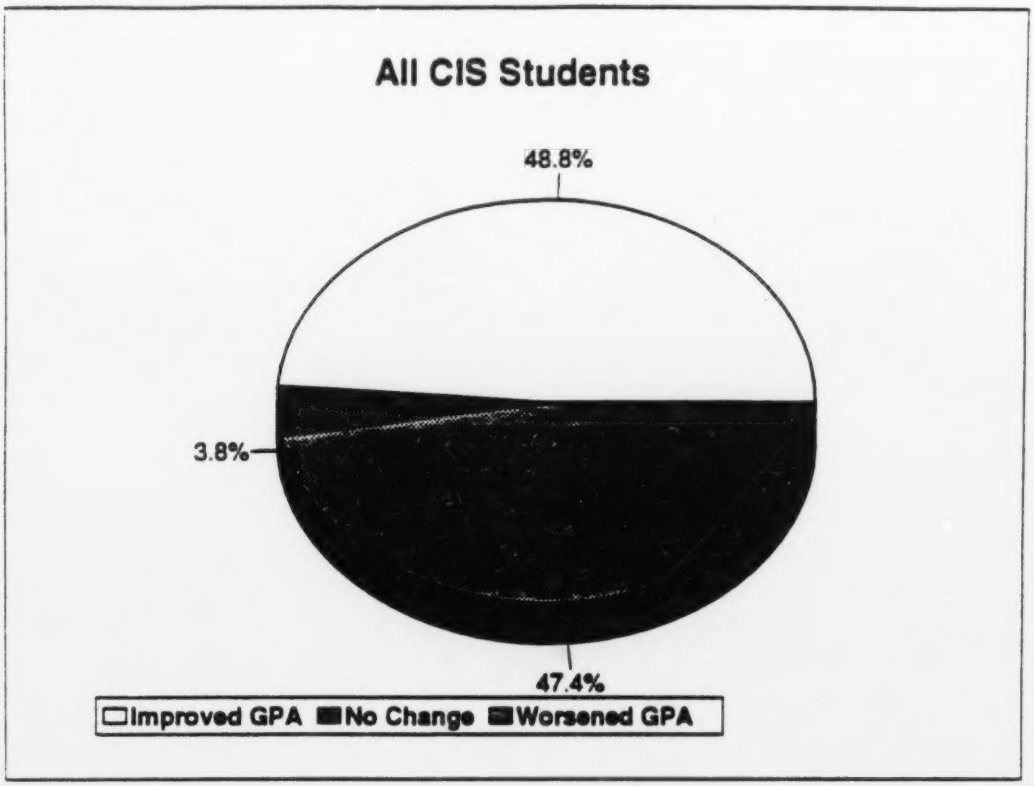
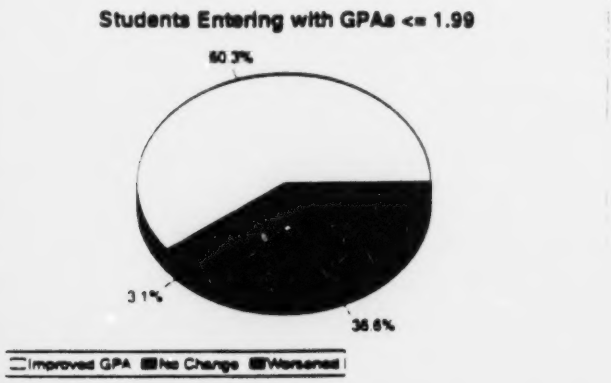
Figure 5

Academic Performance - Comparison: CIS Entry Year With Year Before





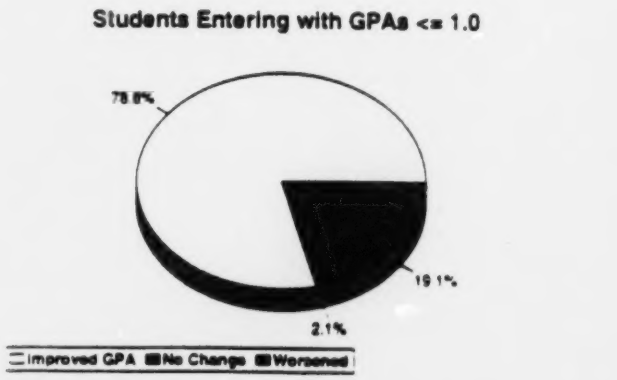


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Table 2.
Percentage of Students Reporting Improvements Subsequent to Participating in CIS

Areas of Improvement	Reported Improvements			
	Big Improvement	Improvement	No Change	Worsened
Grades	38.5	40.2	17.5	3.8
Completing Homework	29.0	39.7	28.6	2.8
Absenteeism	24.6	22.5	49.3	3.6
Tardiness	22.3	23.0	51.2	3.5
Relationships With Teachers	25.6	23.5	45.9	5.0
Relationships With Students	20.7	21.8	53.6	3.9
Relationships With Family	20.1	20.1	56.5	3.2
Suspensions	20.4	16.4	60.2	2.9
Excessive Drinking	17.4	8.9	71.9	1.8
School Fights	19.9	16.2	62.1	1.8
Police/Legal Involvement	14.5	10.1	73.9	1.4
Excessive Use of Drugs	12.9	7.9	77.8	1.4
Gang Membership or Association	14.7	9.0	74.6	1.8
Pregnancy or Child Care Needs	13.9	7.3	76.9	1.8

* Percentages are valid percents, excluding missing responses.

Table 3.
Student Assessments of Assistance Provided by CIS

"The CIS Program helped me..."	Percentage Response for Students who Rated the Items as Salient				Non-Salient Responses	
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Number Reporting Non-Salience	Percentage of Total Respondent Sample*
1. Feel better about myself	53.5	36.8	8.2	1.5	48	12.3
2. Improve my health	30.7	48.1	16.4	4.9	86	22.0
3. Get along better with other students	36.8	46.9	10.7	5.5	67	17.1
4. Get along better with my family	39.3	38.9	16.4	5.4	79	20.2
5. Reduce drug or alcohol use	39.9	21.3	27.0	11.8	188	48.1
6. Become drug or alcohol free	38.7	28.3	20.9	12.0	179	45.8
7. Improve my attendance at school	42.8	39.6	13.1	4.6	88	22.5
8. Get better grades	44.6	43.7	9.0	2.4	38	9.7
9. Stop skipping school or classes	39.8	37.2	16.8	6.2	128	32.7
10. Improve my classroom behavior	35.4	46.9	14.8	3.0	84	21.5
11. Like school more	36.2	39.0	16.5	8.3	60	15.3
12. Learn job skills	48.6	38.4	9.4	3.6	42	10.7
13. Learn about preventing HIV/AIDS	50.2	39.1	8.2	2.5	68	17.4
14. Learn about prevention of substance abuse	42.8	40.2	14.0	3.0	87	32.3
15. Talk about my family's problems	38.8	36.9	18.3	6.1	91	23.3
16. Talk with someone about pregnancy or teen parenting	38.7	30.0	25.3	6.0	134	34.3

* N = 391 students

of high quality (i.e., reasonably well compensated, pleasant working environment, and respectful employer-employee relations).

- Most parents are not heavily involved in either CIS activities or school activities; the bulk of CIS services are focused on students, not on their family members. However, parents perceived CIS as providing needed services that are beneficial to their children and that children generally appreciate. Again, parents noted that expanded employment services are crucial; jobs are needed by both students and other adult family members.

Implications for Policy, Practice, and Future Evaluation

We recommend that the CIS national organization place greater emphasis on providing training and technical assistance to bolster those areas where weaknesses have been identified. In particular, programs need guidance in terms of developing procedures to monitor client and system outcomes. The national organization might encourage local programs to annually document their program configuration, including descriptions of service provision and eligible clientele. Local programs probably would benefit from assistance in developing quality assurance/control procedures with respect to record keeping. We particularly recommend that CIS' concept of accountability be broadened to include maintaining data that enable assessments of the effects of programs on students served, as well as for fine-tuning program and project operations based upon demonstrated successes.

Similarly, if federal partnership agencies supporting the national CIS organization wish to have more robust outcome data from local affiliates in the future, we recommend they clearly establish that intent as part of their agreement with CIS. The national organization, in turn, could then stipulate that local participation in national evaluations is a condition that may be attached to communities requesting and receiving CIS training and technical assistance. In addition, guidance could be provided to both the national organization and the local community programs to clarify the issues involved in ensuring confidentiality and in facilitating information sharing among agencies and with the research community. Such guidance might model approaches that can be implemented to offer adequate protection, such as informed consent procedures for students and parents, and formal information-sharing agreements that would guarantee research access to official records for reasonably long periods of time (e.g., to permit longitudinal analysis for five years).

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